LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 511
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

King Œdipus

Sophocles

Translated from the Greek by
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HALDEMAN-JULIUS COMPANY
GIRARD, KANSAS

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KING ŒDIPUS.

CHARACTERS IN THE TRAGEDY:

ŒDIPUS: King of Thebes.

A PRIEST.

CREON: A member of the reigning family, afterwards himself King of Thebes.

CHORUS: A group of elderly Thebans.

TEIRESIAS: A famous seer who is blind.

Messenger from Corinth.

Messenger from the Palace.

A Herdsman.

JOCASTA: Mother and wife of Œdipus.

ANTIGONE: Daughter of Œdipus.

ISMENE: Daughter of Œdipus.

A Boy.

Suppliants at the altar of Apollo—retinue of Œdipus—attendants upon Jocasta—escort of Creon.

Scene: Before the palace of King Œdipus at Thebes.

Time: The heroic age of Greece prior to the siege of Troy.

KING ŒDIPUS.

ACT I.

The palace of Œdipus at Thebes stands quite in the background. It is an ambitious edifice of stone, with columns, adorned with a frieze, sculpturally embellished. A large door, now closed, affords entrance into the palace. There are likewise two smaller doors. All are impressive because of the broad steps leading up to them.

An imposing altar stands well to the front of the scene.

The high priest of Jupiter or Zeus enters slowly from the right. His retinue is made up of some small boys. Their hair is wreathed in fillets and their garb is the tunic over which a cloak is thrown. All bear olive branches to which flakes of wool are affixed. The procession comes next in order—youths, elders and last of all the extremely aged, everybody garbed in white and bearing olive branches. They wend their way past the palace and to the altar, on the steps of which they seat themselves, having deposited the branches in a mass.

The palace doors are thrown open and the attendants and ministers of the court appear. The high priest of Zeus stands up, an impressive figure on the altar in his elaborate robes. The attendants from within the palace stand outside its doors in deferential attitude.

Œdipus makes his appearance from the central door. He is a man in the vigor of manhood, vestured in flowing purple and red, decorated with gold. He wears a crown and carries a sceptre. There is a moment of profound silence before Œdipus begins to speak.

ŒDIPUS

Oh, children, modern offspring of ancient Cadmus, why hasten you before me to these seats with suppliant branches crowned? The city is filled with incense as well as with prayers and groans. And I, deeming it best and right not to hear you, children, through messengers or ambassadors, have come myself here—I deemed glorious Œdipus by all. (*A pause.*) But speak, venerable man, for you are grown fit to speak for these people, with what disposition have you sat down here—fearing or longing? I am willing to help in everything. I would be unfeeling indeed not to feel compassion for this seated throng.

Priest. Oh, Œdipus, ruling my country, you see us pressed forward to your altars—all ages here, some by no means yet strong enough to fly far, some weighted with the years, priests (I of Jupiter), and some the choicest unwed youths. The remainder of the populace, sit crowned with suppliant boughs in the public square before the twin temples of Minerva where the waters of Ismenus mingle with prophetic embers. The city, as indeed you may see for yourself, is much shaken and scarcely lifts its head from the depths of the dire surge. The earth is dying in the unripened buds of the fruit, dying in the herds of cattle, dying through the children and through the barrenness of women. The fire-bearing god, in form of a hateful plague, has rushed down upon the city. The house of Cadmus is devastated but sorrowful Hades is enriched with groans and lamentations. I do not deem you equal to the gods nor do these youths seated here around me, but in the woes of life and in the vicissitudes divinely sent we judge you to be first among men—he who, coming to

the city of Cadmus, delivered us from the tribute we yielded to the cruel singer. (*An allusion to the riddle of the Sphinx which Œdipus solved for the Thebans.*) And regarding these things you got no knowledge from us and were not taught a thing but with the help of a divinity it is said and believed that you re-established our life for us. And now, supreme Œdipus, most powerful of all, we, everyone in petition here entreat you to find a remedy for us, whether you hear of it in a message from the gods or learn it from a man. From the experienced and those who have lived through vicissitudes I anticipate the best of counsel. Come, oh, best of men, restore our city! Live up to your fame! This land hails you as its savior for your foresight in the past. Let us not have to remember of your sway that we were set first upon our feet and later fell. Restore the city once for all. You brought us luck like a bird of good omen then and now be equal to the past performance. For if you are to rule the land, as you are its sovereign, it is better to hold sway over living men than over a void. For neither tower nor ship is anything if it be destitute of men within.

Œdipus. Oh, pitiable children, known, not unknown to me is the hope in which you have come longingly before me. Well did I know already that you were all ill. Yet while you suffer there is not one among you who suffers as I do. The pain of every one of you comes to himself for him alone to feel and not another. My soul grieves for the city, for myself and for you all together. Thus you do not rouse me from sweet sleep. You should know that I have shed tears for many things and traveled many paths in a labyrinth of thought. After much keen looking, I have found one cure only and that I

have wrought. The son of Menœceus, my own brother-in-law Creon, I have despatched to the Pythian abode of Apollo that he might learn how we may save the city either by doing something or voicing something. And this day, considering the time that has passed, causes me anxiety as to what he is doing. He is absent beyond the due time. When he arrives, I would be evil indeed if I did not do all that the god makes plain. (*Interested gestures on the part of some of the youths seated on the steps of the altar suggest the approach of a newcomer.*)

Priest. You speak well to the point. They have just been signalling to me that Creon is coming here.

Œdipus. Oh, king Apollo, may the luck he brings be as good as his eye is bright!

Priest. He looks favorable, at any rate! Otherwise he would not be stepping this way having a head crowned plenteously with the fruitful laurel.

Œdipus. Soon shall we learn. He is within earshot. Oh, Prince, my kinsman, son of Menœceus! Bringing what tidings from the god have you come to us? (*Creon enters, slightly breathless and revealing his excitement in his gestures. He is a tall, fine looking man of mature years, vigorous and conscious of his rank and importance. The wreath upon his brows has conspicuous berries in its leaves, a favorable sign. He wears a short tunic of yellowish tint over which a bright cloak hangs easily.*)

Creon. A lucky omen! I will even say that things difficult to bear will all end in good fortune if they happen to be rightly managed.

Œdipus. What is the message like? I am neither encouraged nor intimidated by such tidings.

Creon. If you must hear while these (*indicat-*

ing the throng) are present, I am ready to speak or else to walk inside.

Œdipus. Speak to all. For them I bear more of sorrow than for the sake of my own soul.

Creon. Let me tell what things I heard while at the abode of the god. King Apollo openly bids us expel the pollution from the country, for it is a thing actually nourished in this soil—we must drive it out and not foster the incurable.

Œdipus. With what purge? What is the nature of the affliction?

Creon. A man must be exiled. Otherwise slaughter will be repaid with slaughter for that blood which curses the city.

Œdipus. For what man does he thus proclaim misfortune?

Creon. We had, oh King, Laius for ruler of this land before you administered our state.

Œdipus. That I know from hearsay. I never saw him.

Creon. He being dead, we are plainly enjoined to execute vengeance upon his murderers.

Œdipus. In what land are they? Where there shall we find the worn trace of this old guilt?

Creon. In this very land, it is said. That which is sought is secured. What we do not look out for, gets away from us.

Œdipus. Was it while at home or while he walked the fields or while he was abroad that Laius fell victim to this murder?

Creon. I was told that it happened while he was away to consult the god, but on the way back home, to which he never returned, although he started.

Œdipus. Was there no messenger or no fellow voyager on the road from whom information might have been gained and used?

Creon. They are dead, except one who, flying

in fear, can tell with certainty but one of all the things he saw.

Œdipus. What thing was it? One thing might show us how to find out many if we could get but a little beginning of hope.

Creon. He said robbers met and slew him—not one but in the might of many hands.

Œdipus. How dared the robber go to such a length of boldness if something was not done with money here?

Creon. That was thought of. Laius having been slain, no rescuer appeared to us in our woes, none to avenge him.

Œdipus. Such an ill having befallen the king in that fashion, what prevented a discovery of everything?

Creon. The subtle Sphinx kept us from seeing what lay at our feet in order that we might be the more intent on what was made to seem obscure to us.

Œdipus. I will myself make all things plain from the beginning. Quite rightly has Apollo and rightly have you bestowed this glance backward upon the dead. It is but right that you should behold an ally in me, avenging the land and the god at the same time. Not merely for the sake of remote friends, but in my own behalf I will put an end to this evil. Whoever it was that slew might yet wish to strike at me with the same hand. In avenging the victim I therefore really help myself.—But arise from these steps, my sons, as quickly as possible and remove these suppliant branches some of you, while others assemble the Theban populace here. For I am undertaking everything. We shall be happy with the god or we shall perish.

Priest. Oh, children, arise! For the sake of the very things he promises we came here. Oh, that Apollo, who despatched these oracles

hither to us, may arrive as our deliverer and end the plague!

Œdipus walks within the palace followed by Creon and the attendants upon the King, who close the doors. The Priest and the suppliant youths go off in a slow procession.

The elders of Thebes, venerable men of the city, forming what is known in Greek tragedy as the Chorus, now enter on the right. They are clad in somewhat long robes, reaching to the feet, over which are cloaks worn in the gracefully negligent Theban fashion. All proceed to the altar.

Chorus. (*We are to assume, although it is by no means certain, that the Theban old gentlemen making up the so-called chorus have by this time entered the place called in the ancient Greek theatre "orchestra." The old gentlemen do not speak in chorus throughout—the modern word "chorus" being misleading as to this—but in alternate groups, and one of them may carry on a conversation with a leading character.*) Oh, honey-worded oracle of Jupiter, why have you left Pytho, the rich in gold, and come to flashing Thebes? I am all suspense, shaking my timid soul in fear, oh, Delian physician Apollo! What fresh crisis do you destine for me, standing in awe of you, or what old woe to return with the encircling years? Speak to me, oh, child of golden hope, thou divine voice of Fame! First I call on you, daughter of Jove, divine Minerva, and upon your sister, the guardian of the land, Diana, the chaste, sitting on the round throne of the market place, and upon far-darting Apollo. Oh, three times a foiler of fate, appear to me if ever before on account of some impending curse you rushed to the city to banish with a nod the fire of plague and come again now!

Alas!
I bear countless woes. The whole people are sick on my hands nor does counsel bring a means by which help is rendered. Neither the offspring of the glorious land increases nor with the birth of children do the women sustain their shrieking agonies. You may see one well-winged bird after another, more powerful than irresistible fire, making for the shore of the evening god. The innumerable host of these is destroying the city. A remorseless, death-bearing breed lies on the plain unmourned. Among them are wives with gray-headed mothers at the foot of the altar and elsewhere other suppliants groan for pitiful woes. The healer is entreated and the voice of pain is heard at the same time.

Wherefore, oh, golden and fine-faced daughter of Jove, send us a healing!

And the fiery Mars, he who is now unbrazen in shield, yet sets me afire with loud cries, may he run backward from our land, either driven by a mighty wind to the vast depths of Amphitrite or to the hostile Thracian harborless tide. In the end, if night deserts us, all will come to pass in the daytime. Oh, ruler of the lightning bolt amid the fire-bearing groves, oh father Jove, destroy him beneath your thunder!

Lycian king, Apollo, how I wish your arrows, showered from your bow bent with its golden string, were sent as unconquerable auxiliaries of ours, as well as the fire-bearing flashes of Diana, with which she races among the Lycian mountains. I invoke him of the golden snood, him who is named for this land, Wine—visaged Bacchus, the god hailed with shouts of "evoe," the intimate of the Bacchantes, to approach as an ally with burning and bright flamed torch against the deity the gods despise.

ACT II

Œdipus enters from the main door of his palace at Thebes. He is unattended. This division of the play into acts corresponds to the "episodic" suggestions in the original. It indicates no interruption of the action although the play was written by Sophocles in what we would now call a series of "acts." The Theban elders forming the chorus stand in attitudes of silent expectation. They had barely finished the lines with which the chorus ended when Œdipus appeared in obvious agitation, exercising a control over his gestures and his features, which renders his words doubly impressive.

Œdipus. (*He addresses one individual in the chorus, who carries on the dialogue.*) You are asking. The thing you ask for, a healing of the plague, you shall have if you will listen to my word and, having heard it, receive it with a lightening of your woes. I will say that I am a stranger in this affair and a stranger to the deed. Hence I could not trace it far myself, not having a record or a key. Now—and I will make the least citizen among the citizens heed —let me say this to you and to all Thebans.

Whoever of you saw Laius, the son of Labdacus, slain by any man, I command him to reveal everything to me.

If he be afraid, I myself will purge him of the offense. He will suffer nothing severe except that he must certainly leave the country. If anyone else knows the murderer to be in or of any other country, let him not keep silent. I myself will bestow the reward and there will be favor into the bargain.

If yet you remain silent and if anyone from fear for some friend or on his own account disregards my word, it behooves all to hear me.

Of the man himself, I say this, whoever he is in this country; (the country of which I am the ruler and which I administer) let no one give him hospitality or speak to him nor join with him in prayers to the gods nor in sacrifice associate with him nor even use the same wash basin. Let all repel him from their doors, as a plague to all of us, as the Pythian god Apollo has just declared oracularly to me. Thus will I prove an ally to the spirit of the dead man.

And I pray that the guilty, whether it be but one who did the deed secretly or whether there were many together, may spend an accursed life, an evil man living evilly. And I pray, if he should be on my own hearth or in my own home as my associate, that I myself may suffer the things I have just declared. I recommend you to fulfill these things for my own sake and for the sake of the god and for the sake of the land thus perishing godless and fruitless.

Even were this thing not of divine origin, it would ill become you to tolerate the pollution thus unpurified—the slaughter of the best of men and kings—but to seek it out and end it. So I take the matter in hand myself, having the ruling power which he had before me, and having his wife and his home. We would even have children to share on both sides if his offspring had not come to grief—if any were actually born—and now it has pleased fortune to bestow his power upon me.

Hence I will do these things just as if he had been my father, and fight for his cause and arrive at my goal in this quest of the slayer of the son of Labdacus, son of Polydorus, who was son of Cadmus who came before him, son of Agenor.

As for all who will not do these things I bid, I pray the gods to send them no crop when they plow the land and no children from their

wives, and to such a doom wasting them away to add something yet worse. To you and to the rest of the Thebans to whom these words of mine are pleasing, may Justice herself be an ally and all the gods generally be with you forever.

Chorus. (*One individual among the aged men of Thebes talks with Oedipus.*) I will speak, oh, King, as if you held me bound with a curse. I am not he who slew nor can I point out the slayer. Whoever may have done the deed, it is the business of the bestowing Apollo to answer the question.

Œdipus. You have spoken truly. But to force the gods to do what they do not wish—that is a thing no man is strong enough to do.

Chorus. Regarding a second point, I would like to say something that seems proper to me.

Œdipus. If there be yet a third point, don't omit to put it into words.

Chorus. In seeing through a matter of this sort, I think Teiresias more like Apollo than one king is like another. By investigating this thing with his aid, oh, King, you will find out certainly all about it or at any rate with most prospect of success.

Œdipus. Even this detail is not neglected. I have attended to it. At the suggestion of Creon, I even despatched a double escort. It is strange that he is so long in appearing.

Chorus. As for the other points, they have long since been involved in vague words.

Œdipus. To what purport? I would like the whole tale.

Chorus. He was said to have been put to death by someone on the road.

Œdipus. That I heard, too. Nobody knows who witnessed it—none sees the man who saw the deed.

Chorus. But if he has his due share of fear,

he will not stay in town after hearing your curses.

Œdipus. He who did not shrink from the deed will not fear a word.

Chorus. (*Indicating the approach of a new arrival on the scene.*) Here is the one who can point him out. Here they are leading in the sacred prophet in whom alone among men the truth was implanted.

Teiresias enters, led by a boy. Teiresias, the seer, is an old man with a long white beard. He is vestured from head to foot in white and he leans upan a staff. The boy wears a bright-colored cloak. Both have sandals. The escort stand a little apart from the pair. Teiresias is led straight to Œdipus from whom he is at last separated by a slight interval.

Œdipus. Teiresias, you who study everything, those things which are taught and those which must not be even told, things heavenly and things mortal, you know what a plague is in the city, even if you can not see. In you, oh, seer, we find our only savior and protector from this woe. Indeed, Apollo—if you have not heard it already from the messengers—told us in reply to our embassy that the only deliverance that can come from this evil consists in our slaying the slayers of Laius when we discover who they were, unless we expel them from the country. Do not be sparing either of the omens afforded by birds or of any other means of prophetic insight. Protect yourself and the city. Protect me. Save all from the contagion of the dead. We are in your hands. The sweetest of labors is that of helping our fellowmen with what we have or however we are able.

Teiresias (*his expression is keen despite his blindness*). Ah! how terrible it is to know when knowledge is unavailing! These things

I willingly dropped from my memory. Otherwise I should not have come here.

Œdipus. What is that? You came reluctantly?

Teiresias. Allow me to return home. It is best for you to bear your burdens while I bear mine—if you will be persuaded by me.

Œdipus. You do not speak lawfully nor do you show love for this city, which bore you, when you thus deprive it of the use of your prophetic gift.

Teiresias. I do not see that you are lifting up your voice in time and I do not want to endure the effects of the same tardiness.

Œdipus. In the name of the gods, do not turn us off, since you know about this matter and since we are all as suppliants at your feet!

Teiresias. You are all uninformed. I did not when it was timely reveal my own woes then, to say nothing of your own now.

Œdipus. What do you say? Having the information, you will not tell anything but will betray us all and devastate the city?

Teiresias. I will give pain neither to you nor to myself. Why do you ask questions about these things? You will learn nothing from me.

Œdipus. Vilest of the vile, you would vex the heart of a stone! Will you never speak out but forever seem thus untouched and indisposed to make an end of this matter?

Teiresias. You condemn my anger but you do not detect the fury dwelling within you as you find fault with me.

Œdipus. Who would not be furious at having to listen to such words as those with which you now dishonor this city?

Teiresias. Things will come around though I go home in silence.

Œdipus. These things will not come of themselves and therefore you ought to tell me.

Teiresias. I do not want to talk further. If

you like to do so on that account, your soul may explode into its most violent rage.

Œdipus. My anger is such that I will omit nothing of what I understand. Know then that it seems to me you conspired in the deed and did it except as regards the actual slaughter with your own hands. If you saw I would even say that the deed was yours alone.

Teiresias. Really? I bid you stand by the proclamation you have made and from this day forth speak neither to these people nor to me for you are the unholy polluter of this soil.

Œdipus. How shamelessly you have burst into all this speech! And where do you think you will find a refuge by fleeing?

Teiresias. I have a refuge. I am strong enough to support the truth.

Œdipus. Who taught you? Not your prophetic gift?

Teiresias. It was yourself. You provoked me into speech although I was not willing.

Œdipus. With what word? Say it again that I may be the better informed.

Teiresias. Did you not understand me before? Are you luring me into speech?

Œdipus. Not to have you tell what is known already. But speak again.

Teiresias I say you are the murderer of the man whose murderer you are looking for.

Œdipus. You will not speak words so woful a second time with impunity.

Teiresias. Shall I say something else that you may rage the more?

Œdipus. As much as you like—it will be said in vain.

Teiresias. I say you do not know that you live now shamefully with those who are dearest to you, that you do not see the evil you are in.

Œdipus. Do you expect always to be able to say that without paying a penalty?

Teiresias. If there be any power in the truth —I do.

Œdipus. There is power in it for all but you and it is not so for you because you are blind in your mind and in your ears as well as in your eyes.

Teiresias. You are foolish to heap scorn on the things for which all here will soon be heaping scorn on you.

Œdipus. You dwell in one unbroken night and hence you could injure neither me nor anyone else who can see.

Teiresias. It is not your destiny to fall by my hand since Apollo is strong enough and it is his affair.

Œdipus. Are these inventions your own or Creon's?

Teiresias. Creon is no source of woe to you but you are to yourself.

Œdipus. Oh, wealth and power and art of art supporting the life that is most admired, how much envy you store up! For the sake of this power which the city gave unasked into my hands, the faithful Creon—friend from the first—longs to expel me by coming upon me in stealth. He has prevailed with this ingenious magician, a wily priest, who can see only his own gain but in his true art was born blind. (*He turns fiercely upon Teiresias.*) But tell me where did you ever show yourself a wise prophet? Why did you not, when that watchful rhapsodist, the Sphinx, was here, say something to the citizens as their means of emancipation? Indeed, the riddle was not one for the casual man to find an answer. There was need of a seer. You did not appear to be one either with the birds or from knowledge gained through the gods. But I, arriving, the unknow-

ing Œdipus, put an end to the Sphinx, using my common sense and learning nothing from birds. He it is whom you now seek to expel, thinking you will be able to stand close to the throne of Creon. You will yet weep, it seems to me, for thinking to rid the land of pollution in this way—you and the one who devised this with you. If you did not seem to be such an old man you would learn by suffering the sort of thing you meditate.

Chorus. It seems to us that these words are spoken in anger and your own likewise, Œdipus. It is not necessary to look into that but how the prophecy of the god may most accurately be interpreted.

Teiresias. Even if you are a king, we must be on the same plane as regards the privilege of retort. In this respect I too am sovereign. I do not live a servant to you but to Apollo. Nor am I inscribed or registered as one under Creon's protection. I will therefore speak, since you reproach me with being a blind man. You, indeed, have eyes but you can not see the evil in which you dwell nor how you live nor those with whom you make your home. Do you really know your own origin? Unsuspected by yourself, you have become the enemy of your people in the shades below and upon the earth above. The twofold scourge of the frightful curse of your father and your mother will yet drive you from this land. Although you see now, then you will be in darkness. Where shall the haven of your lament not be? What slope of Cithaeron is not to echo it speedily when you understand the marriage through which, having had a fair voyage, you though shelterless, entered a home! A multitude of other evils you do not yet feel though they will yet bring you down with your children. Because of these things you heap insult upon Creon and upon my words. Yet there is not

among mortals any who will be cast forth more wretchedly than yourself.

Œdipus. Must these things thus said by this man be endured? Is he not to be sent to execution? And quickly, too? Will you not turn your back upon these doors and go?

Teiresias. I would not have come if you had not summoned me.

Œdipus. I did not know that you would speak mad things or it would have been a long time before ever I brought you to my home.

Teiresias. I was born, as it appears to you, a lunatic but to the parents who were the authors of your existence I seemed sane.

Œdipus. What? Stay! Who among mortals begot me?

Teiresias. Life begot you and will destroy you!

Œdipus. How enigmatically and foolishly you put everything!

Teiresias. And are you not the best endowed to find out what such things mean?

Œdipus. Heap scorn upon me for the very thing in which you find me superior.

Teiresias. It was that very circumstance that destroyed you.

Œdipus. Yet if I save this city I do not care.

Teiresias. I'm going now. You, boy (*speaking to the lad*) lead me.

Œdipus. Take him! When you are here you make trouble and are in the way. When you are gone you can cause no further annoyance.

Teiresias. I'm going, having said the things for which I came and not because I am frightened by your looks. You are not the one to destroy me, I tell you! This very man whom you sought with threats, proclaiming the killing of Laius, is right here now, a stranger come to dwell here, although by birth he will

be found a Theban—without any joy in that circumstance. Changed from a man who can see into a man who is blind, poor instead of being rich, he will go forth into a strange land feeling his way with a stick. He shall appear to his children, with whom he now lives, their brother as well as their father, while to the woman who gave him birth he will prove a son as well as a husband, his father's flesh and blood as well as his father's murderer! Go inside and ponder these things. If you detect what is false in them, say then that I am a seer without understanding! (*Teiresias is led off by the boy, both in a state of extreme agitation. The escort who brought Teiresias in march off with the blind seer. The fifteen old men of Thebes who form the chorus manifest their agitation in more subdued fashion. When Teiresias has disappeared from view, Œdipus, whose rage and dismay are most obvious, retires slowly within the central door of his palace.*)

ACT III.

The scene is still laid in front of the palace of Thebes. The elders who form the chorus are in solitary possession of the stage. They have had a brief interval in which to recover their composure. We are now at the beginning of what is known technically as the first "stasimon," a name for a song sung usually while the chorus are at their station in the orchestra. A stasimon has a characteristic measure and will here be followed by an "episode." The episode corresponds somewhat roughly to a modern "act." The word episode as used in Greek tragedy means "entrance."

Chorus. Who may he be of whom the oracle-speaking Delphian rock says he accomplished deeds unspeakable with murderous hands?

The hour has come for him to set his pace for flight swifter than that of horses in a storm.

Armed with fire and lightning flash, the son of Jove darts after in pursuit, and with him are the unavoidable woes.

There flashed from snow-clad Parnassus the command newly made known that all should track the hidden man.

He wanders through the forest wilds and through the caves and over the rocks like a bull, heavy-hearted and heavy-footed in solitude, keeping aloof from the oracular rock of the earth's centre. (*The poetical thought is that this oracle was thus geographically situated.*)

For all living things fly about it ever. (*We must all consult an oracle at last, the chorus seems to suggest.*)

Terrible things, terrible, indeed, are set in motion by the wise interpreter of bird omens some intelligible and some incredible. What I am to say I can not think. I am beset with anticipations although looking neither forward nor backward.

What could possibly have occasioned conflict between the family of Labdacus and the offspring of Polybus I never ascertained either in time past or in the present. There is nothing for the sake of which I could impeach the public character of Œdipus or help the Labdacians in clearing up the mystery of the death.

But Zeus and Apollo are keen and they understand human affairs. The judgment of him who as a prophet is estimated more highly than myself is not necessarily true. In wisdom a man may go beyond wisdom (*be too sophisticated*).

Yet never will I, until I have valid evidence, join in condemnation.

The Sphinx, that winged maid, went openly

against him once and he was seen to be a wise man by actual demonstration.

Never through any judgment of mine shall evil be ascribed to him.

Creon, clad in bright garments that contrast markedly with his attire hitherto, comes in haste upon the scene from the right. He proceeds in agitation to the centre of the stage and gazes anxiously at the group of old men forming the chorus.

Creon. Townsmen, having learned that King Œdipus condemns me with terrible words, I have come here in haste. If he considers that in this crisis he is the victim of my words or deeds, then, in case I were deserving of such condemnation, I should not care to have a long life. Blame of this kind is not a simple matter for me to bear but the greatest of burdens, for if I am an evil doer to the city, I must be deemed an evil doer to you and to my friends.

Chorus. But this insulting language resulted from vehemence of temper rather than mature deliberation of mind.

Creon. The charge appeared to be that the seer spoke falsely because he was persuaded by my arguments.

Chorus. He did say those things but I do not know for what reason.

Creon. With a normal expression and a right mind he charged this guilt upon me?

Chorus. I do not know. Things done by rulers I do not comprehend. But here he is coming out of his house himself. (*Œdipus emerges from the palace door in the center, which has been swung back by two attendants, who wait. Œdipus is now attired in a flowing silken robe thrown carelessly over his shoulders and trailing the ground as he paces some-*

what heavily and wearily. He has sustained a mental shock and he halts mournfully at the edge of the steps in front of the palace.)

Œdipus (*after a long stare at Creon*). You —how did you come here? Are you so bold-faced that you dare to come to my very home —you who must manifestly be the slayer of that man—you who are plainly the usurper of my authority? Tell me in the name of the gods do you see something sinister or silly in me that you think you can do such things? Did you think I could not detect this stealthy craft of yours overwhelming me or that I could not help myself if I did detect it? Now, is not your undertaking a mad one, to seek without friends and without the multitude that sovereignty which can be obtained only with the aid of money and the mob?

Creon. (*Ironically.*) You know how it is done. In reply to what you have said will you now try to be a listener and pass judgment when you are informed?

Œdipus. You are terrible in talk and I am poor at learning from you. I have found you disagreeable and oppressive.

Creon. First hear what I have now to tell of this thing.

Œdipus. Don't tell me in regard to this thing that you are not in fault.

Creon. If you think obstinacy without intelligence is a good thing, you do not understand.

Œdipus. If you think you can wrong a man who is related to you and not be brought to justice, you do not understand either.

Creon. I grant that this is well said. But let me know the nature of the ill you are suffering from.

Œdipus. Did you urge or did you not urge

that it was necessary for me to send for that holy man?

Creon. I am of that opinion still.

Œdipus. How long a time has passed since Laius?

Creon. Since he did what? I don't quite understand?

Œdipus. He passed away unseen through a deed of violence.

Creon. The date to be learned would be an old one and the time that has passed long.

Œdipus. Was this seer then practicing his art?

Creon. As wise and as esteemed as he is now.

Œdipus. Did he refer to me at all in those days?

Creon. Not while I was standing by.

Œdipus. Did you have no investigation into the death?

Creon. We did—how could we have neglected one? We heard nothing.

Œdipus. How came it that this seer did not say these things then?

Creon. I don't know. When I do not understand a thing I like to keep silence regarding it.

Œdipus. Something you know and could tell if you were well disposed.

Creon. What? I shall not deny it if I know it.

Œdipus. For what reason, if he did not consult you, did he never mention my killing of Laius?

Creon. You know whether he is saying that. I have a right to learn from you the very things you asked just now of me.

Œdipus. Find out everything. I shall never be caught in murder.

Creon. Indeed? Have you not married my sister?

Œdipus. [*Ironically*]. There is no denying what you say.

Creon. You rule this country with her—on equal terms?

Œdipus. She goes along with me willingly in everything.

Creon. And am I not as a third party the equal of you two?

Œdipus. In that capacity you seem to be a poor friend.

Creon. Not if you were frank with yourself, like me. But first consider this. Do you think anyone would seize a sovereignty he would hold in fear rather than sleep unterrified with the same degree of power? I was not born desirous of being a king rather than to act like a king—nor was anyone else who understands what wisdom is. Today I have all things from you without fear. If I were ruler myself, I would be doing many things unwillingly. How could I possibly find it sweeter to be king than to have sovereignty and power without their responsibility? I am not of such bad faith as to long for anything else than the things that are good while gainful. Now I am glad to meet everybody, now everybody hails me, now those who have business with you greet me graciously, seek my intercession. Their good fortune is assured by that means. How would I receive them if I gave up all these things? A man does not become evil while he thinks of the good. For I am no lover of this sophistication and I would not presume to be guilty of it with another. For the evidence of this seek out the Pythian oracle and ask if I have reported it accurately to you. If, again, you think I have planned something in common with this seer, do not find me guilty by one vote but by two—your own and mine. Do not find me guilty

without an open mind. It is not just either to stigmatize the good as evil or to consider the wicked good. To reject a good friend seems to me like putting an end to one's own life which is even dearer. However, in due time you will know this with certainty. Time alone reveals the good man. You may detect the bad one in a day.

Chorus. He has spoken brilliantly, oh King, to one on guard lest he err. Those who are swift to judge are not safe.

Œdipus. When the alert conspirator is stealing towards me, I, too, must be quick to plan retaliation. If I wait for him passively, his purposes will be accomplished and mine will have failed.

Creon. What do you wish? To exile me from the land?

Œdipus. By no means. I would put you to death, not banish you. [*The text is in disorder here*]. I would like to show what malice is by making an example. [*A line seems to have dropped out of the original text at this point*].

Creon. You speak as disposed neither to make concessions nor to give credit for good faith. You don't seem to be in your right mind.

Œdipus. I can do my own thinking about my own affairs.

Creon. You should do the same about mine.

Œdipus. You are evil by nature.

Creon. You don't understand.

Œdipus. The voice of authority must be heeded.

Creon. Not when authority is wrong.

Œdipus. Oh, my city, my city!

Creon. This is my city as well as yours.

Chorus. Stop, oh, rulers! It is time you did! I see Jocasta stepping from the doors. This present quarrel should be composed with her aid.

Œdipus and Creon, thus warned, desist from their debate and glance backward towards the door at the right of the main portal of the palace. The female attendants have opened a door and are now ranged outside it respectfully as Jocasta herself emerges. Jocasta is a well proportioned woman in somewhat advanced years but of extreme distinction of aspect and deportment. She is so well preserved that no suggestion of excessive age is in her features or in her pace as she thrusts from her bosom the folds of a yellow silken robe and reveals an under vestment trimmed in silver. On her feet are white sandals and on her head is a coronet. One of her arms, bared by her gesture, is adorned with bracelets and around her neck is a string of gems. Jocasta stands for a moment a little in front of her attendant maidens. There is a silence.

Jocasta. [*Emerging from the shock occasioned her most obviously by the violence of the scene she has interrupted*]. Unhappy men, why have you provoked this senseless medley of tongues? Are you not disgraced to cause evils on your account when the land is thus plagued? Why do you not go into the house? [*This question is addressed to Œdipus and then she turns to Creon*]. And you, Creon, go inside and do not swell a trifling pain into a great one.

Creon. Sister, your husband Œdipus threatens me with one of two evils—either to exile me from the land or to seize me and slay me.

Œdipus. I admit it. I have caught him in the very act of injuring me bodily with his evil arts.

Creon. May I never be blessed but cursed if ever I did a thing of all he accuses me of.

Jocasta. In the name of the gods, Œdipus, believe it! Respect an oath sworn by the gods as well as myself and those who are near to you.

Chorus. I implore you, oh King, to be persuaded, to reflect to yield.

Œdipus. What do you want me to do?

Chorus. Heed him who did no folly in the past and who is now bound by a great oath.

Œdipus. Do you know what you ask?

Chorus. I know.

Œdipus. Say what you mean.

Chorus. Heap no dishonor upon an oath-bound friend by accusing him with a light word.

Œdipus. Understand thoroughly that in asking this you seek my destruction or my exile.

Chorus. By that sun-god who is brighter than all the other gods—never! May I die godless, friendless and in the last extremity if I have that thought! But to wretched me the wasting land weighs heavily upon the soul if to the familiar ills are joined those that you two endure.

Œdipus. Let him go even if I must utterly perish or be thrust forth from this land dishonored. It is your mourning voice I heed, not his. This fellow, wherever he goes, will be hated.

Creon. It is you who are hateful even when you yield but dreadful when you go to an extreme in your anger. Those who have such temperaments are rightly compelled to bear the most painful things.

Œdipus. Will you let me alone and depart?

Creon. I will take my leave and set out—inglorious to you but to these [*indicating the chorus*] as glorious as ever.

Creon takes his departure in violent agitation, Jocasta gazing after him but not otherwise showing a trace of anxiety. In another moment, the chorus rouse her from her preoccupation with her own feelings by directly addressing her.

Chorus. Madame, will you not go with him inside?

Jocasta. [*Starting from her reverie*]. When I have learned about this affair.

Chorus. There came a fantasy of words between them and that which is unjust rankles.

Jocasta. Were both equally involved?

Chorus. Yes, indeed.

Jocasta. What was the dispute?

Chorus. Enough! It seems to me enough when the land is bowed down in woe to let the subject rest where it was dropped.

Œdipus. See to what you have come, good man, as you are in intention, by disregarding and moderating the wish of my heart!

Chorus. Oh king—and I have said it not once only—know that I must be beside myself. I would seem to myself destitute of understanding, if I separated myself from you who gave my dear country, raving in its distresses, the right direction and henceforth may prove its mentor.

Jocasta. And tell me, in the name of the gods, oh king, for the sake of what thing is your anger so warm?

Œdipus. I will tell, for I regard you more than those things which Creon has deliberated against me.

Jocasta. Tell—if you can explain the cause of the quarrel intelligibly.

Œdipus. He declares me to be guilty of the murder of Laius.

Jocasta. Does he know this himself or did he learn it from another?

Œdipus. He sent a wicked prophet, for he keeps his mouth free as regards responsibility on his own account.

Jocasta. Drop the subject you are talking about and listen to me, and learn why, so far as you are concerned, no mortal ever had the

prophetic gift. I will show you concise proofs of that. An oracle—I do not say from Apollo himself but from his servants—came to Laius once—that the doom of death by a son's hand was to overtake him. The son would be born to him and myself. Now he, as the story goes, was slain by bandits where three roads cross one another. Less than three days after the birth of the child he bound the joints of its feet together at the ankles and had it thrown away by the hands of others in a deserted mountain. Thus Apollo did not permit that one to become the slayer of its father or let Laius die by the hand of a son—the horror he dreaded. Such were the things prescribed by the prophetic sayings which you need not consider at all. Whatever the god wants looked into he can easily make manifest himself.

Œdipus. What a wandering of the spirit and what an agitation of mind, madam, are yours while you listen to me.

Jocasta. From what anxiety do you yourself speak as you consider this affair?

Œdipus. I thought I heard you say that Laius was murdered where three roadways meet.

Jocasta. So it was said nor has the tale yet come to an end.

Œdipus. And where is the district in which this calamity occurred?

Jocasta. The land is called Phocis. From Delphi and from Daulia the forked road leads to the same spot.

Œdipus. How long a time has elapsed since these events?

Jocasta. Just before you appeared as ruler of the land, this thing was proclaimed to the city.

Œdipus. Oh, Jove—what hast thou decided to do in my case!

Jocasta. [*With profound affection*] Why are you so heavy hearted about this, Œdipus?

Œdipus. Don't ask me! Tell me what Laius looked like, whether he was in the vigor of youth.

Jocasta. He was big and his head was whitening a little on top and his aspect was not very different from your own.

Œdipus. Oh, wretched me! I have been throwing myself into a dreadful fate and that was the very thing I did not know.

Jocasta. [*She has dropped her tender tone and manner and speaks to him in accents new and strange*]: What are you saying? I shrink from you, king, when I look at you.

Œdipus. I feel a dreadful foreboding that the seer has the gift of sight. If you will reveal one more thing you will make this plainer.

Jocasta. However I shrink from doing so, I will tell you what you want to know when I learn what it is.

Œdipus. Did he go away with a small escort or did he have many spearsmen in the style of a ruler?

Jocasta. They were five all told and among them was a herald. One chariot bore Laius.

Œdipus. Ah! The thing is perfectly clear now. Who was it who told these things to you, madam?

Jocasta. One of the servants—he alone came back safely.

Œdipus. Does he happen to be on the premises now?

Jocasta. No, indeed. The moment he came back and saw you wielding the power of the murdered Laius, he implored me—touching my hand as he did so—to send him to the farms that he might guard the grazing herds so that he might be as far from the city as possible. I sent him off. He was a deserving servant and he merited an even greater favor than that.

Œdipus. How could he be brought back to us most quickly?

Jocasta. Easily. He is near. But on what account do you want this?

Œdipus. I fear myself, madam. Perhaps I have talked too violently. That is why I would like to see him.

Jocasta. But he will be here. I, too, perhaps, oh king, am a proper person [*she speaks indignantly*] to learn what it is that you find so hard to bear.

Œdipus. You shall not lack your share while I am overwhelmed by anxieties. To whom could I better speak than to you, passing through such a calamity?

Polybus, my father, was a Corinthian. My mother was Merope of Doris. There I was deemed the biggest man in the town before a turn of fortune overtook me, a thing to wonder at but not worth my excitement over it. A man at a feast, overcome by intoxication, reproached me for not being really the son of the man supposed to be my father. I was angry and barely restrained myself that day. Visiting them the next day, I questioned my father and my mother. They uneasily ascribed the shame of the speech to the intoxicated man. I rejoiced with them at this yet the thing always irritated me. It went around a good deal. Unknown to father or mother, I journeyed to Pytho, but Apollo sent me away without the thing for which I went. Misfortunes, terrors, griefs, he foretold—as that I must be married with my own mother and expose to the sight of men an offspring not fit to behold, and that I would be the murderer of the father who begot me. When I had heard these things, I fled from Corinth, finding my way by following the course of the stars to where I might never be seen

ashamed of the evils done in fulfillment of the oracles about me.

Walking on, I arrived in this region of which you say the king was made away with.

To you, madam, I will reveal the truth.

When, as I went on, I came near the triple road a herald crossed my path and a man in a chariot with horses, such as you mentioned. The leader and the old man himself wanted to put me forcibly out of the way. Thereupon I, in a rage, hit the driver who was turning me aside. When the old man noticed this from the chariot he brought two lashes down upon my head as I went by him. He not merely got the same back but with a swift blow from the stick in my hand he was sent out of the chariot rolling until he was flat on his back.

I slew the whole lot of them.

If this stranger was allied to Laius by any tie of blood, who is more unfortunate than this man here (*he beats his own breast*)? What man ever became more an enemy to the gods? It is possible for no stranger and for no city to receive him as a guest or even to hail him. They must drive him from their doors. Yet it was no one but myself who laid these curses upon me.

Now I stain the marriage bed of the dead man with my own two hands that slew him.

Was I born wicked?

Am I not, indeed, altogether impure?

If I must fly, and in flight am not to see my own, then neither must I enter my own native land or else I shall be joined in marriage with my own mother and slay my father Polybus, who begot me and nourished me.

Would not he be right who judged this man (*he smites his breast again*) to be under the ban of some relentless god? Oh, sacred and chaste divinities, never may I see that day but

may I go from among men unseen before I acquire for myself the stain of such a woe.

Chorus. Oh, king, these things are terrible to us! Yet until you learn what happened from the bystander, the witness of the murder, do not lose hope.

Œdipus. Just so much hope is left me that I can wait only for the herdsman.

Jocasta. Why are you in anxiety for his appearance?

Œdipus. I will tell you. If he be found saying the very thing you say, I shall have escaped a grief.

Jocasta. And what information in particular did you get from me?

Œdipus. You said he told of bandits having slain him (*Laius*). If he still mentions the same number, it was not I who slew him. One can not be equal to many. If he still talks of one man, single-handed, then the deed is certainly traced to me.

Jocasta. The number was first disclosed as you understand it and it is not for him to omit anyone from the total now. The whole town heard this thing, not I alone. If, then, he modifies his former story, he can never, oh king, show the murder of Laius to have been correctly foretold, for Apollo declared he was to die by a child of mine. However, that unfortunate never slew him but himself perished previously. As for what relates to prophecy I would not myself look before me or behind me after this.

Œdipus. You discriminate nicely. (*He is sarcastic*). Nevertheless, send someone for the herdsman. Don't omit this.

Jocasta. I will send speedily. But let us go into the house. I would never do a thing that was not agreeable to you.

They go into the palace by way of the main

entrance, followed by their retinues, leaving the old men of Thebes, who comprise the chorus, in solitary possession of the scene.

ACT IV.

The front of the palace of Œdipus is disclosed in a somewhat subdued light. The scene is deserted save for the old men of Thebes—the chorus—who are gathered in a group at a distance, in the so-called orchestra. Their observations are not uttered in one chorus, but in a series of remarks, sometimes spoken simultaneously by five or six, again proffered by one or possibly evoking a kind of dialogue in what is known technically as strophe and antistrophe. We must remember that the functions of the chorus in Greek tragedy are involved in obscurity and that the most positive statements regarding Greek metres and Greek music are mainly conjectural.

Chorus. May fate favor me with a sacred chastity in all my words and in all my deeds. May their place of origin be high in the heavens always, coming down through the celestial ether as do children born of divine inspiration. Let my acts and deeds be fathered by the Olympian god alone. He was not begotten by a breed of mortals nor does he ever lie down to forget in sleep. Great is the god in these things and he does not age.

(*There is great difference of opinion among scholars regarding the correct way to translate the above lines.*)

Wanton arrogance begets the tyrant. Pride is the despot's source. Tyrannical licentiousness, running over with a vain excess in many things, neither proper nor advantageous, rushes to its ruin, once it has scaled the loftiest heights, over

the inevitable precipice, where no foot avails and no step is sure.

I pray the god never to end the struggle that is for the welfare of the city.

I will always regard the god as our defense.

Should anyone in word or in deed act arrogantly as he goes forth without fear of justice, with no reverence for the shrines of the gods, may misfortune make him her prey for his ill-fated haughtiness. If his gains be not justly procured by innocent means and if he lays unholy hands on things not to be profanely touched, may ill luck seize him!

What man guilty of such things dare pray the gods to divert their shafts from his soul? If such things be deemed worthy of honor, what is there for us to dance for? (*The old gentlemen are not asking, as some scholars infer, why they should join in the choral dance, as an act of worship. These old men are permitted despite their years to dance at good tidings. That was the Greek attitude. Old gentlemen who danced when vice went about triumphant would be a source of disedification.*)

Never again shall I go worshipfully to earth's unprofaned centre, the Delphian oracle, nor to the temple of Abae nor to the shrine of Jove at Olympia, unless these things are brought into harmony for all mortals to point out with the finger.

Now you, sovereign Jove, if you be rightly named, the ruler of all and everything, forget not yourself nor your eternal sway.

As things that fade away, the old oracles regarding Laius are set aside and Apollo is nowhere distinguished with honors.

Things divine are passing away.

Jocasta emerges suddenly from the door on the right of the main entrance to the palace. The splendor of her attire on the occasion of her previous entrance is subdued by her sup-

pliant's robe. She carries a suppliant branch. Her aspect is mournful. The crown is no longer on her head. She stares intently at the altar of Apollo in front of the palace before turning to address the Theban elders who follow her movements with scrutinizing eyes. In another minute, before Jocasta has said a word, her attendant maidens emerge from the same door through which she has come and stand in a respectful attitude behind her.

Jocasta. Lords of this land, the idea occurs to me to make a pilgrimage to the temples of the gods, taking this wreath and these offerings in my hands. Œdipus is rousing a great fury within him from all his woes. He does not, like a rational man, interpret the new in the light of the old, but judges by what is said to him, even if fears are suggested. (*She proceeds to the shrine*). Since I can do no more by way of advice, to you I come, oh Lycean Apollo, you being nearest, to you I come a suppliant with these offerings, that you may grant us deliverance and purification. How we all tremble, seeing him, who is the pilot of the ship, stricken with fear!

While Jocasta is in the attitude of a suppliant, an elderly man, in the short cloak and flowing head dress of the foppish Corinthians, emerges from the left. He shows signs of weariness from a long journey and he leans heavily on his staff as he comes slowly forward. In the technical language of Greek tragedy he is a "messenger".

Messenger. Strangers, might I ascertain from you where the palace of King Œdipus is? If you know where he is, I would rather you told me, that I may speak with him.

Chorus (*indicating the edifice*). These buildings are where he lives and he is at home, stranger. This lady here is the mother of his children.

Messenger. May she be blest and dowered with blessings for ever since she is his own true wife.

Jocasta. (*She has risen and come forward*). The same blessings to you, oh stranger! You deserve that for your kind speech. But tell us what you come in need of or what tidings you would bring.

Messenger. Good news for this house and for your husband, madame.

Jocasta. What is it about? From whom do you come?

Messenger. From Corinth. The word I shall soon speak will delight you. How could it fail? Yet it will be vexing as well.

Jocasta. What is it. How can it have thus a double effect?

Messenger. The people of the Isthmian land of Corinth will make him king, as they say there.

Jocasta. Why? Is not the aged Polybus strong enough to rule any more?

Messenger. Naturally not, since death has him in the tomb.

Jocasta. What do you say? Polybus dead?

Messenger. May I die if I do not speak the truth!

Jocasta. (*She turns to her attendants*). Girl, will you not go quickly to the master and tell him these things? (*One departs*). Oh, prophecies of the gods, what has become of you? Œdipus long ago fled this very man, fearing lest he kill him. Now this man has succumbed to the hand of fate instead of to his!

Œdipus emerges through the central door, attended as usual. The face of the King is brighter and he wears a bright garb. He manifests a more affectionate mood.

Œdipus. Jocasta dear, beloved wife, why do you send for me to come here from the house?

Jocasta. Listen to this man and consider as you listen, consider where the sacred prophecies of the god are leading.

Œdipus. Who is he and what has he to say to me?

Jocasta. He brings news from Corinth that your father Polybus is not alive but dead.

Œdipus. What do you say, stranger? Tell me the news yourself.

Messenger. Since I must be the first to announce this positively, be assured that the man is dead indeed, and departed.

Œdipus. Was he made away with or did he succumb to disease?

Messenger. The least swaying will send the old body to its sleep.

Œdipus. Then it seems the unfortunate died of sickness.

Messenger. And of the long time that he had lived.

Œedipus. Who after this, woman, will ever stare into the embers on the altar of Apollo or study the birds crying above? Their outgivings were that I was destined to kill my father. He died and is hidden beneath the earth. I have there within a spear untouched. I hope he did not die longing for me. In that case the death would be due to me. But these prophecies Polybus took with him and they are in hell unfulfilled.

Jocasta. Did I not say all this to you long ago?

Œdipus. You foretold it. But I was distracted with fear.

Jocasta. Don't turn these things over in your mind any more,

Œdipus. Yet why am I not to shrink from my mother's bed?

Jocasta. What should a man be afraid of? To him who is dominated by chance, there can

be no wise foresight. He lives at random, however one many. Don't be afraid of a marriage with your mother. Many men have been wedded to their mothers in dreams. He to whom these things are as nothing supports life most easily.

Œdipus. All this would be well said by you if she who bore me were not still alive. Since she lives it is imperative that I keep away from her, however well you talk.

Jocasta. Nevertheless, your father's tomb will be conspicuous to the eye.

Œdipus. A big thing, I admit. But there is still a dread of the living.

Messenger. Who is the woman of whom you are afraid?

Œdipus. Merope, she, old man, who lives in the house of Polybus.

Messenger. What is there about her that makes you afraid?

Œdipus. A dire, divine prophecy, stranger.

Messenger. Can it be told? Or is it not lawful for another to hear it?

Œdipus. By no means. Apollo once foretold to me that I must be married to my mother and that my father's blood must be shed by my own hands. For that reason I have long dwelt far from Corinth. It was fortunate, for me that I did so. Still, the faces of our parents are the most agreeable to behold now and then.

Messenger. Was it truly to avoid such things that you went away from your city?

Œdipus. I was anxious not to be the murderer of my father, old man.

Messenger. Since I came here so well disposed, how happens it, oh king, that I have not delivered you from this anxiety likewise?

Œdipus. You shall have a due reward from me.

Messenger. I have most assuredly come here so that I should get some benefit out of your return home.

Œdipus. But I will never live in the home of my parents.

Messenger. It is obvious, son, that you do not realize what you are doing.

Œdipus. How so, old man? Tell me, for the sake of the gods.

Messenger. If on account of these things you avoid going back home.

Œdipus. I'm afraid Apollo wil apear wise in my case.

Messenger. You fear some malady through your parents?

Œdipus. Exactly, old man—the fear that haunts me always.

Messenger. You know you have nothing to fear from justice?

Œdipus. Why not, if I am the child of these parents?

Messenger. Because Polybus was not anything to you by blood.

Œdipus. What is that you say? Did Polybus not beget me?

Messenger. No more than this man (*strikes his chest*) did—just the same.

Œdipus. How can he who begot me be to me as if he had not?

Messenger. He did not beget you—neither he nor I.

Œdipus. In spite of that, he called me his son.

Messenger. He took you as a gift from my hands, I would have you know.

Œdipus. Yet he loved me greatly although I was from the hand of another.

Messenger. He was prompted to do so by his own lack of children.

Œdipus. Had you bought me or found me when you gave me to him?

Messenger. I found you among the glens of Mount Cithaeron.

Œdipus. Why were you going about in such places?

Messenger. I stood guard there over the mountain herds.

Œdipus. Were you a shepherd and did you wander about for wages?

Messenger. At that time, my son, I was your rescuer.

Œdipus. What was I suffering from when you lifted me up in my extremity?

Messenger. Your ankles would show.

Œdipus. Ah! Why do you mention that old sore?

Messenger. I freed you from thongs that pierced your feet.

Œdipus. Terrible was the shame I got from my swaddling clothes!

Messenger. So that you got your name from that misfortune. (*The allusion is to the name of Œdipus, which Shelley translated into Swell-foot.*)

Œdipus. By the gods! Was it from my father or from my mother. Tell me.

Messenger. I don't know. He who gave the bundle into my hands knows better.

Œdipus. Then you took me from another and did not find me yourself?

Messenger. No—another shepherd gave you to me.

Œdipus. Who was that? Do you know him well enough to identify him with a description?

Messenger. Someone said he might be of the household of Laius.

Œdipus. He who used to be king of this country?

Messenger. Exactly. I think this fellow was his herdsman.

Œdipus. Is this fellow still alive so that he could see me?

Messenger. You people who belong in this country ought to know that best.

Œdipus. (*He addresses all*). If any of you here ever saw this herdsman of whom he speaks either in the fields or in Thebes let me know. The time has come to discover these things.

Chorus. I think he refers to the very one you wanted brought from the country. But Jocasta here may be able to inform us about that.

Œdipus. Wife, do you know him for whom we just sent—him of whom this man speaks?

Jocasta. Why talk about him? Pay no attention to these things that are said. Deem them a useless matter even to remember.

Œdipus. Let it not be that having laid hold of these proofs I fail to disclose my birth.

Jocasta. Don't, in the name of the gods, if you regard your own life, search out these things. I am suffering enough as it is.

Œdipus. Have courage. You won't seem base though I am the descendant of slaves for three generations

Jocasta. Be persuaded by me, I beg. Don't do this.

Œdipus. I will not be persuaded not to find out this thing definitely.

Jocasta. Since I understand the matter perfectly I tell you what is for the best.

Œdipus. These things that are for the best have long caused me anguish.

Jocasta. Child of doom—may you never learn who you are!

Œdipus. (*Impatiently*). Is anyone bringing

that herdsman here to me? (*Indicating Jocasta*). Let her rejoice in her good birth!

Jocasta. Oh, unhappy one! Oh! That is all I have to say to you—never another word again!

She retreats in the most violent agitation into the palace, her maidens attending her with every demonstration of sympathy. All is suddenly silent within.

Chorus. Why has she gone, Œdipus, impelled by dire woe? I am afraid that from this silence something terrible will burst!

Œdipus. Burst what must! I intend to learn my origin, however lowly it may be. She perhaps (for she argues like a grand woman) is ashamed of my low birth. I, deeming myself the child of fortune, shall not despise her good gifts. I was born of my mother. The seasons are my kin and they have brought me great things and small. Such was I born and I will never be anything else to the extent of failing to learn my origin. (*He paces slowly up and down in front of the palace, awaiting the arrival of the herdsman while his retinue throw open the great central door to the palace as if expecting him to enter it. Finding his expectation disappointed, Œdipus slowly ascends the steps and disappears through the portal. There is a sudden uproar from within.*)

ACT V.

The scene is unchanged—the palace at Thebes being bathed now in a bright light. Music is heard—its spirited lilt suggesting a light mood. The old men of Thebes who form the chorus are discovered in an easy attitude.

Chorus. Were I a prophet and experienced in judgment, were I not ignorant of the things of Olympus, you would not, oh Mount Cithareon,

by the light of the next moon, be unaware that Œdipus honors you as his nurse, his father and his mother. You shall be glorified in our dance and in our song for having brought blessings to our rulers.

Hail, Apollo, may these things be ever delightful to you!

Who begot you, my son? Which one of the long lived nymphs who drew near to Pan, wandering in the mountains, or what bride of Apollo bore you? He finds all the bosky highlands a delight. Perhaps it was Mercury, king of the Cyllenes, or the god of the Bacchantes, dwelling on the mountain heights, who found you borne to him by one of the nymphs of Helicon, the divinities with whom he loves best to play.

The song and dance of the elders of Thebes might have proceeded were it not interrupted by a hasty entrance of Œdipus. He is still impatient for the coming of the herdsman for he looks this way and that. At last he descends the steps.

The old man from Corinth—the "messenger"—stands beside the altar to which Œdipus slowly advances for the purpose of talking with the old man of Thebes—the "chorus.

Œdipus.—If I may form a conjecture, elders, I think, I see the herdsman—although I never spoke to him—for whom we have all been looking so long. In the matter of great age he answers to the man. Moreover, those who are leading him look like members of my own household. (*He looks towards the right, from which direction the newcomers are approaching.*)

Chorus. I recognized him, you may depend upon that. He was the herdsman of Laius and as faithful as any other man would be.

The herdsman makes his appearance under escort by the servants of the household. The herdsman is old, his beard gray and unkempt, coarsely dressed in sheepskin and homespun. He carries a rough staff. He glances uneasily about him and is evidently here under compulsion. The attendants watch him lest he make off.

Œdipus. First of all, let me ask you, Corinthian stranger, is this the man you meant?

Messenger. The very man you see.

Œdipus (*to the herdsman*). You, old man, look here at me as you speak and tell me what I ask you. You were once in attendance upon Laius?

Herdsman. (*He speaks reluctantly*). Yes. I was not a bought slave but bred in the house.

Œdipus. What work did you do or what life did you lead?

Herdsman. Most of my life I spent with the flocks.

Œdipus. What neighborhoods did you frequent?

Herdsman. Cithaeron at times and the country round about it at others.

Œdipus. Do you know if you ever were aware of this man somewhere—

Herdsman. What did he do? And what man are you talking about?

Œdipus. He who's here. Did you ever come across him or talk to him anywhere?

Herdsman. Not so as to tell quickly from memory.

Messenger. There's nothing to wonder at, sir. But I will surely bring back his recollection to him. I know well that he recalls the time when we were in the vicinity of Cithaeron. He tended two flocks. I had one. I was by this man for three seasons, from spring to the win-

ter months. When winter came I would drive my cattle to my fold. He took his to the stables of Laius. Do I tell what we did (*to the herdsman*) or am I not telling it?

Herdsman. You speak the truth although the time was long ago.

Messenger. Now, tell me. You know you gave me a child then for me to bring up as my own son?

Herdsman. What is that? Why do you tell this tale?

Messenger. This is he (*indicating Œdipus*) who was then a babe.

Herdsman. Bad luck to you! (*He is speaking to the Messenger*). Won't you be quiet?

Œdipus. Don't scold him old man. Your language calls for reproof more than his.

Herdsman. Noble sir, how did I do wrong?

Œdipus. By not telling about the child of whom he gives us the story.

Herdsman. He tells nothing from knowledge but takes trouble in vain.

Œdipus (*menacingly*). You won't speak as a favor to us but you will tell if you are made to cry with pain.

Herdsman. Not, for the love of the gods—don't torture an old man.

Œdipus. Here, someone, quick—take hold of his hands!

Herdsman. Miserable man that I am! Why do you do this? What do you want to know?

Œdipus. Did you give the child of whom he speaks to this man?

Herdsman. I gave it to him. I ought to have died that day.

Œdipus. You'll come to that by not telling the truth.

Herdsman. If I speak, I'm even likelier to be destroyed.

Œdipus. This fellow seems to go forward haltingly.

Herdsman. No I, for I said already that I gave it to him.

Œdipus. Where did you get it from? Your own home or another's?

Herdsman. I did not get it at home but from somebody.

Œdipus. From which one of the townsmen or at what house?

Herdsman. For the love of the gods, sir, say no more!

Œdipus. You're doomed if I must ask you this once more.

Herdsman. It was from the family of Laius.

Œdipus. The child of a slave born of his own stock?

Herdsman. Oh! I am about to tell you the terrible thing itself.

Œdipus. And I am about to hear it. It must be heard nevertheless.

Herdsman. It was said to be his own child. But your wife inside could best tell you how that may be.

Œdipus. Then she gave it to you.

Herdsman. Certainly, oh king.

Œdipus. For what emergency. What did she want you to do?

Herdsman. Put it out of the way.

Œdipus. Did she suffer from having borne it?

Herdsman. She was in dread of the dire dooms.

Œdipus. What were they?

Herdsman. The word was that he would slay his parents.

Œdipus. Then why did you leave it with this old man?

Herdsman. I was full of pity, sir, lest he

bear it away to another country, the one from which he came himself. He saved it for the worst and greatest doom. If you are what this man says, you have become an ill fated man—that you must know.

Œdipus. Now all things have come to pass exactly! Oh, light—revealing me as the child of those who should never have brought me into the world, as the father of those I should not have begotten, as the slayer of him I should have saved—oh, light, may this be the last I see of you! (*He reels, but recovering rushes from the scene through the great palace door, his escort following in confusion.*)

The herdsman is discovered in flight, the messenger from Corinth pursuing him with gestures.

The old men of Thebes cower in their corner.

ACT VI.

The palace of Œdipus is distinctly seen in the subdued light. The old men of Thebes monopolize the scene. All seem overwhelmed by their burden of grief.

Chorus. Ah! generations of mortals, I consider you as not having really lived. What man gets more of joy than its seeming, than the fading semblance? With your example before me, oh, Œdipus, I can deem no mortal —not one—ever blessed or happy.

He it was who aimed at what was out of reach and secured all the delights of wealth and power, oh Jove, and overcame the virgin who sang oracularly with bending claws (*the Sphinx*) and rose a tower in my land against death, wherefore he was called my king and was honored as the greatest ever ruling in Thebes.

Now who could be heard as more wretched? who by turn of life, who in woes dwells more wretchedly? Oh, glorious name of Œdipus! The same bosom harbored you when you took shelter within it as son and as bridegroom. How was it possible for the father's furrowings to endure your sowing silently so long?

Time seeing all things, was unwilling to find you out. The ineligible who wed are damned when begetter and begotten are the same. Oh, child of Laius, how I wish I had never beheld you! I moan as one whose plaint escapes unreadily from his lips. In truth it was you who breathed new life into me and closed my eyes restfully in sleep.

One of the palace attendants bursts excitedly from the great central door. He gesticulates violently and hails the Theban elders as they conclude their chorus. This newcomer is known technically as the second messenger but he should be regarded as a courtier.

Second Messenger. You—ever the most honored in this realm, what doings you will hear of what things you shall behold, what griefs must be your burden if with a kinsman's feeling you still cherish the family of Labdacus! I doubt if either the river Ister or the river Phasis can flow through this abode in purification of it, so many evils lurk beneath its roots, so many come at once to light—evils done willingly as well as unwillingly. Those sorrows bring most anguish which we have brought upon ourselves.

Chorus. Those woes of which we knew before did not lack features to bewail. What besides these are you telling us about now?

Second Messenger. The thing that is quickest both to tell and to learn. The beloved and brilliant Jocasta is dead.

Chorus. Unfortunate woman! From what cause?

Second Messenger. She killed herself. The most painful thing of all was done in solitude. The sight is not for everyone. However, as far as memory of it remains to me, you shall be informed of the sufferings of that unfortunate. When, stirred to a fury, she went within the hall, she proceeded at once to her bedroom, tearing her hair with both hands. The moment she had passed through the doors, and closed them, she called upon that Laius who is so long dead, recalling also the child she had by him then, by whose hand he was to die while she who bore it was left to breed from it an offspring no less woful. She bemoaned the marriage from which, doubly wretched, she was to bear a husband by a husband and children by her child.

Nevertheless, I do not even yet know that she perished because of these things. For Œdipus dashed shouting inside—on whose account it was not for us to look upon her misfortune, for we stared at him as he dashed around. He wandered wildly back and forth, asking us to get him a spear, so that he might encounter the wife who was no wife, the mother doubly fertilized in bearing himself and his children. Throughout his madness a demon was revealed, guiding him, for not a man among us was beside him.

Shouting in frenzy, as if a guide directed him, he made for the double doors and beat the pliant bolts out from their locks and staggered within the apartment. There we saw the woman, hanging entangled in noosed cords that swayed.

When we saw her, he loosed the noose from which she hung suspended, and terribly he

groaned. When she, miserable woman, lay on the floor, dire to see was the thing that followed. He snatched from her robes the clasps of gold with which she had adorned herself, putting them here and there, and just where his eyelids meet he pierced his eye balls—stabbing them! He said they should not see the ills, the woes, by which he had all this while been made to suffer nor the evils he had wrought or caused but in darkness ever after should not behold what he should not have beheld and fail to recognize those he longed to know. (*The import of the words of Œdipus here is a subject of controversy and no versions of his words in this scene can do justice to the power of the original.*

Uttering such dire things not once only but many a time he raised his hands and beat upon his eyes. The bleeding eye balls stained his beard at every blow and they did not send forth blood drippingly but all at once a dark gore fell like hail.

These things were worked wickedly by both and not by one alone, for husband and wife were alike involved in the evil. The happiness they had before was happiness indeed. This day is now one of groan and doom and death and disgrace and there is not a name for every kind of these evils and not one of them is lacking.

Chorus. Is this suffering man eased of his anguish?

Second Messenger. He calls for someone to let down the bars and show to all the Thebans the murderer of his father and his mother, shouting blasphemies I must not repeat. He says he must expel himself from the country by not remaining in a home accursed, for he is himself under a curse, his own. But he lacks

strength and a guide. The ill he suffers is more than can be borne. He will show you himself. The bars of the portals have been dropped. Soon will you see a sight that even he who hates him must pity.

(*Œdipus comes slowly forth from the central attendants from within. The old men of Thebes, the chorus, gaze in sympathy and horror, a few going the length of averting their gaze. Œdipus is led down the steps. He is blinded and his beard is blood stained.*

Chorus. Oh, anguish terrible for men to see! Oh, direst of all things I have encountered! What madness, oh, miserable man, overwhelmed you? What demon direr than the greatest of demons leaped upon you in dreadful doom? Ah, wretched man! Yet I can not endure the sight of you, many as are the questions I would ask, many the things I would learn, many the mysteries I would peer into. You give me such a shock! (*One or two members of the chorus draw near Œdipus and aid in supporting him.*)

Œdipus. Oh, wretched I am—alas! To what land shall I be taken, miserable man? What has become of my voice, losing itself in a void? Oh, demon that attends me, where have you vanished? (*The Greeks, even Socrates, believed in the warnings of the demons that attended them as guardian angels or fates.*)

Chorus. Terrible—neither to be heard nor seen!

Œdipus. Oh, cloud of my repellant darkness, inexpressible, unavoidable, unconquerable and untamable! Alas and yet again alas! How I am pierced by the sting of these thorns and pricks and by the memory of evils endured!

Chorus. Nor need there be any wonder that in these ordeals you experience a double grief

and a double evil. (*One of the old men of Thebes, emerging from his place in the chorus, puts an arm around Oedipus and whispers words of sympathy.*)

Œdipus. Oh, friend, you are still my monitor and guide! You still stand by to help the blind man. Ah! You do not hide from me and I know you well, in darkness though I am, from your voice.

Chorus (*the old man speaks*). A terrible thing to do—how did you go so far as to put out your sight? What divinity urged you?

Œdipus. Apollo it was—Apollo, friends, he thus rounded out my ills with these sufferings. I, the long suffering, did this with my own hand—no one else. What was there for me to see which to look at could be pleasing to my eye?

Chorus. It was indeed just as you say.

Œdipus. What was there left for me to see or to love or to bring forth or even to hear with joy, my friends? Lead me from this place as quickly as you can, lead me forth, friends, the great undone, the accursed who is still the most hateful of mankind to the gods.

Chorus. Pitiable both for your woe and for your discovery of its nature, how I wish that never you had known it!

Œdipus. To hell with him, be he who he may, who freed my feet when I was an abandoned babe and saved me from slaughter on the mountain side, for he did me no deed of mercy. Had I but died then I never would have been a source of such woe to my friends and to myself.

Chorus. That it had been so is my wish as well.

Œdipus. Then would I never have become the slayer of my sire, nor would mortals have

called me the bridegroom of her who bore me. Now I am godless, an unholy child, married to the wife of him who begot me, a wretched thing! If there be an evil yet more timeworn than this evil, that, too, is fated for Œdipus!

Chorus. I do not see that I can call you well advised—it were better that you did not live at all than to be living blind.

Œdipus. Do not argue with me or suggest that things being as they are, I did not do for the best. I can not comprehend how, seeing with such eyes, I could go to meet my father down in Hades, or my miserable mother either, to both of whom I did things for which a halter would be too easy for my punishment. Could the sight of my children seem desirable to my eyes, coming into the world as my children came into being? Never may the sight of them afflict my eyes! Neither the town nor its towers nor its gods can be a delight to me. I am the most wretched of men who was once the most glorious, I, nourished and made great among the Thebans, have deprived myself of the sight of them. I myself bid them thrust forth the unholy, the unchaste member of the family of Laius, thus exposed by the gods. Cursed by such a stain, was it for me to behold these things with perfect eyes? By no means! Were there yet a stream of hearing that could be dammed through the ears, I would not have refrained from blockading my wretched mortal frame so that the blind man would not even hear. An exile of the mind beyond the limits of its woes is sweet. Oh, Mount Cithaeron, why did you receive me? Why, having taken me, did you not kill me at once so that never might I have betrayed to men whence I came? Oh, Polybus and my Corinthian fatherland where my old home was that I called my father's too, how beautifully you reared me

for woes beneath a surface so fair!

And now, being evil, I am found to have come from evils. Three roads and a hidden vale and a grove and a pass into three roads—ah, you drank my own blood from my hands through my father, but do you remember me and what deeds I did in you and, having come here, what I did besides? Oh, marriage! In marriage I was begotten and in marriage children were born to their mother's child and in marriage was exposed a family of one blood in fathers, brothers, sons, brides, wives, mothers—all that can be most shameful among the deeds of men! But that should not be talked of which it is not well to do.

In the name of the gods, hide me in exile as swiftly as possible, or having killed me or thrown me into the sea, let me never be seen again. Come! Dare to lay hands upon a man in agony! Obey me and fear not. My woes no mortal but myself could bear!

During the utterances of these last words, the aged Thebans indicate by their gestures the approach of a new arrival. This turns out to be Creon, who wears upon his head a crown and carries a sceptre and is garbed in the robes of a kingly dignity. He is followed by a retinue.

Chorus (*to Œdipus*). The very one you ask is here in your need—Creon. He is the one to do and to advise since he alone can be the guardian of the land bereft of you.

Œdipus. (*He draws his robe over his face and shrinks*). Ah! What shall I say to him? What in me can seem trustworthy or just? I have shown myself evil to him in everything heretofore.

Creon. I have not come, Œdipus, as a scorner or as one resenting evils in the past. (*He turns to his retinue*). If ye have no more reverence left for the offspring of mortals, honor at any rate the light of the sun, the sovereign who

with his flame warms all things, and do not thus expose to him an abomination of the kind that neither earth nor holy rainfall nor the light of day inclines to. Lead him as quickly as possible within. It is best that only kinsmen see and hear the woes of their kin.

Œdipus. In the name of the gods—since you belie my anticipation by revealing yourself to me, the worst of men, as the best yourself, do what I ask. I ask on your account, not mine.

Creon. What thing are you lacking that you implore me to bestow?

Œdipus. Exile me from this land as quickly as possible, where no mortal will ever accost me again.

Creon. I would do this gladly, I assure you, if if were not necessary to ascertain first of all from the god himself what to do.

Œdipus. But his oracle was wholly revealed. I, the unholy, the parricide, must be made away with.

Creon. Thus was it spoken. Yet, seeing what we stand in need of, it were best to ascertain what we ought to do.

Œdipus. Would you consult the oracle in behalf of such a suffering wretch?

Creon. Surely you will now yourself place faith in the god.

Œdipus. Let me remind you and implore you to give to her that is within such a funeral as becomes you for you will duly fulfill your obligations to one of your own. Never suffer this your native city to endure me as an inhabitant but let me dwell in the mountain to which I owe my fate, the mountain celebrated through me, Cithaeron, which both my father nd my mother fixed upon as my tomb so that I may perish as they ordained. This much I know: neither disease nor any other doom can end me or ravage me. For never would I have

been rescued from death except for the purpose of some dire evil. Yet let my fate, whatever it be, proceed further. As regards my male children, Creon, take no responsibility upon yourself. They are men and will have no poverty in life, whatever they may be. But my two pitiable and suffering little girls who never sat down without me to eat at a table but shared with me everything that I even touched—they are an anxiety to me now. Let me touch them with my hands and weep for these woes with them. Oh, prince, oh, noble in nature as in birth. If I may touch them with my hands I shall seem to have them as much as I used to hold them when I saw. (*The two little girls, Antigone and Ismene, are led in by members of the retinue.*) What dare I say? Do I not already hear my dear ones—in the name of the gods!—weeping. Creon, pitying me, has sent me the two dearest, the two best beloved of my children—do I not speak the truth?

Creon. You say what is so. I am he who grants this favor for I know the delight you feel in their presence, having observed it before now.

Œdipus. May good fortune be yours and in this path of mercy may you find a better guardian divinity that was my lot to meet! (*He extends supplicating hands in the direction of his two little daughters.*) Oh, children, where are you? Come here, to feel these hands, which are brotherly hands as well as fatherly hands that caused the once bright eyes of your own sire to seem what now they are! (*The two little girls rush weeping into his arms.*) He, my children, neither seeing nor learning the truth, became a father through her who bore him. So I shed tears for you. I am not able to see you. I must meditate for the rest

of my sad life upon the lot to be yours through the usages of mankind. With what society will you mingle in the town, what dinners will you go to from which you will not come home in tears instead of staying to see the sights? And when you have reached a marriageable age, who will he be that is to stand beside you, children, to incur such reproaches as will disgrace my children and yours as well? What in the shape of misfortune is lacking? Your father killed his father. He wed his own mother and where he was himself begotten he begat you of her who bore himself. With such things will you be reviled. Who will marry into such a breed? No one, my children and you will be left to fade unwed. (*He turns and seems with the motions of his hands to grope towards Creon.*) Oh, son of Menœceus, since henceforth you alone will be left to father these two, since we, the authors of their being, are both undone, do not let them go about poor and unwed who are of your own family, nor humble them through my misfortunes. Pity them rather, seeing them thus so young bereft of everything except their connection with you. Oh, kind man, assent to what I ask by letting me touch your hand! (*Creon extends his hand to Œdipus, who kisses it and turns back to his children.*) You, my children, if you were capable of understanding them, I would have given many a precept. For my sake pray that wherever circumstances may lead you to live you will meet with a better lot than did the father who begot you.

Creon. You have gone far enough in tears. Now go into the house.

Œdipus. I must obey although it is not pleasant to do so.

Creon. All things are good in their season,

Œdipus. You understand the terms upon which I go?

Creon. State them—I will know them when I hear them.

Œdipus. The land to which you send me must be uninhabited.

Creon. You ask me for a god's gift.

Œdipus. But to the gods I have become most hateful.

Creon. Then you will soon have your wish.

Œdipus. You promise it, then?

Creon. What I do not understand I do not like to say idly.

Œdipus. Lead me away from here.

Creon. Go—but leave the children.

Œdipus. Don't take them from me.

Creon. Don't seek to hold everything. The things you laid hold of did not remain with you through life.

Chorus. Look on Œdipus, oh, people of the fatherland, Thebes, look on him who read the famous riddle and was a mighty man. Which of the citizens did not look with envy upon his good fortune? Into what a sea of dire misfortune he has now come! Even until his last day, deem no one who is mortal happy until —suffering no pain—he reaches the final moment of his life.

Œdipus is urged gently within the palace while his children are being carried away to the right.

THE END.

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